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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
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RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 1014
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 1862
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: SECT MEMBERS DEPORTED, PREACHING
RESTRICTED

REF: A. ABUJA 01515
[1](#)B. ABUJA 00820

Classified By: Political Counselor James McNulty for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Authorities evicted over 1,250 Darul Islam members from Niger state to their home states and deported others to Niger Republic for lack of documentation. The mass eviction, exacerbated by unhygienic conditions at GON-provided temporary housing, evoked criticism from human rights groups. The GON's perception that another violent confrontation may occur prompted Borno State to vet Muslim preachers during Ramadan. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) GON officials evicted over 1,250 members of the Darul Islam sect, removed by police August 15 (ref A) from their village in Niger State, to their states of origin. Individuals reportedly received compensation for unmovable assets and traveled to their respective state capitals by bus under police escort. Nigerian Immigration Service officials deported another 300 members to neighboring Niger after determining that they lacked proper documentation. Police detained Darul Islam members for questioning at the Government Technical College Mokwa before eviction. Unsanitary living conditions there reportedly led to an outbreak of cholera.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Human rights activists and Muslim organizations, including the Muslim Students Society Association of Nigeria, alleged the GON violated the constitutional and human rights of Darul Islam members. Niger State officials maintained, however, that they made adequate preparations for the welfare of the individuals temporarily housed at the college and insisted that security forces had to intervene to prevent another religious crisis following the Boko Haram violence in July.

Preachers Vetted

[1](#)4. (C) On August 25, Borno State approved 150 Muslim scholars (out of several hundreds) to preach during Ramadan. Zanab Baguna Hassan, Assistant to the Shehu of Borno, told POLOFF the Shehu met with the State Commissioner for Religious Affairs to determine which scholars would receive approval. Hassan claimed the Shehu personally met with the Ulama (Muslim preachers) to advise them on how to preach without

inciting violence.

¶5. (C) Deputy Governor of Borno State Alhaji Adamu Dibal confirmed to PolSpec August 26 that the state government sought to regulate religious preaching even though the state assembly has yet to pass any enabling legislation. He stated that 150 preachers gained temporary permission to preach in only "designated mosques in Maiduguri, not in the entire state as claimed by the press." He added that Muslims could fulfill other religious duties throughout Ramadan but that preaching in major mosques required permission from the state government. Dibal recognized that "denying clerics the right to preach would bring more problems than solutions" and "generate bad blood" between many Muslim groups and the state government. Therefore, he explained, the government will work with the Ulama and traditional rulers to develop an acceptable law for the regulation of preaching within Borno State.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: The eviction of Fulani herdsmen from Plateau State in April 2009 (ref B) to their states of origin appears to have served as a precedent for state action to prevent conflict. GON concern over the recent Boko Haram violence has now led to potential limits on freedom of religious expression, even if there is no clear legal authority to do so. End Comment.
MCCULLOUGH